

QUAINT CUSTOMS OF WORLD'S QUEER PEOPLE

PRAYER WITHOUT CEASING IN TIBET



Praying water wheels in Tibet.

The folks who live in the mysterious country of Tibet, in Central Asia, are the most prayerful people in the world. They pray, and pray without ceasing. You retire at night, you rise early in the morning, but long after you are asleep and long before the sun has risen the voice of prayer has filled the air.

They pray everywhere, utilize everything movable and immovable to help in their devotions. The wind waves their prayer flags in the air and the streams revolve their cumbersome prayer wheels such as those shown in the illustration.

Entrances to villages are strewn with countless paper prayers. Streamers of prayers are hung from tree to tree and from house to house. Bridges are pasted with them. Rocks and cliffs are chiseled with prayers.

Praying at leisure, the ordinary spiritual Tibetan will get through four hundred words a minute, but at

a push he can do much more.

In his praying wheels, with the aid of a fairly rapid stream, he will accomplish in a very short time what would perhaps be a burden to him personally. Little strips of paper bearing orthodox prayers are affixed to the wheels, and at once they are revolved again and again by the grateful worshipers.

In the ordinary Tibetan village the Buddhist priestly population may be divided into three classes. First, the lama (or ordained priest) who has made the long journey to Lhasa and there received ordination from the Dalai-Lama. Second, the Draba, an unordained priest who still lives in hope of going to Lhasa. And third, the Amcho, a private lama who has neither desire nor opportunity of ever seeing the sacred city.

The lama is a respectable member of society, well housed and fed and clad generally. He spends his time almost wholly in the temple, accept-